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HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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THE BATTLE OF BENEVOLENCE.

"Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my name's sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad." "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."—MATT. V., 11, 12, 16.

The opening passage of this portion of the Gospel of Matthew is substantially the building up before the eyes of carnal and sensuous men the conception of Christian character, of a new character in which are made conspicuous those characteristics which are least esteemed as virtues among men.

Blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are the mourners. Blessed are the meek. Blessed are men of aspiration, who hunger and thirst after righteousness. Blessed are the merciful, the pure in heart, the happiness-makers—or "peacemakers," as they are called here. Blessed are the persecuted for righteousness' sake.

It is declared, substantially, that men who pursue high ideals of Christian life and character will meet opposition, persecution; and although the form here indicated is that of outward persecution, it is just as true inwardly as it is outwardly. That is to say, persecution for righteousness' sake is just as common to-day as it was in the ages immediately following Christ. Outward persecution against a corporate body, or against representative men who belong to a school or a philosophy—that ceases, mostly. Instead of the church being persecuted by the world, the church has adopted the principle of persecution, and uses it all up, one sect quarreling with another. But the opposition, the resistance, to goodness in men, still continues; and no man ever becomes a Christian after the pattern of the Lord Jesus Christ without a good long battle for it. We are built primarily on the pattern of animals; and as we are born into this life by struggles and by pains, so we go on from infancy fighting for development by struggles and by pains; and unfolding and unfolding, we rise from pure animalism to a form of social excellence. The child becomes affectionate, and comes, little by

SUNDAY MORNING, May 19, 1872. LESSON: JOHN. XIII., 1-17. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection): Nos. 1344, 660, 1181.

little, to regard others' welfare. And still developing, we begin to take in a larger circle, and to refine our conceptions of fineness among men, until at last we come to that full disclosure of disinterested benevolence which the Gospel itself has for its heart and center. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself." This it is to be a Christian. This is the ideal of Christian life.

Now, no man was ever born into that. There is many a man who has been born into an inheritance of money; there is many a man whose father has left him a picture-gallery, a library, and estates, and warehouses, and ships, and stocks, and other annoyances of that kind; but there was never a man who was born into the fully disclosed treasure of a Christian character. Nature has to be grafted before it produces that, always. The natural stock does not bear it. On the way to that every man has to fight his battle. And this is the battle of benevolence, as I call it. That is to say, every man is born a great way off from true benevolence, and he has to fight his way up to that state against powers within and circumstances without. So that if a man comes to that higher ideal which is set forth in the Gospel—the ideal, namely, of one who addresses the whole force of his being to the making of others better and happier—he comes to it by a succession of victories. He earns it by hard spiritual endeavor or conflict.

There is no happiness in this world like that which one mind can produce upon another. Almost all our ideas of true happiness —certainly all when we have risen to any considerable degree of culture and refinement—are ideas of the happiness which one mind produces upon another. Our social gatherings, if you look at their last analysis, amount to that. When we are to receive company. we prepare our rooms so that everything shall be the most cheerful, We dress ourselves so that every man shall seem the most comely to the others. We lay aside all controversy, and all topics that lead to controversy—for no gentleman talks politics in general company. We lay aside everything that is disagreeable, and that will tend to divide opinions. We go as far as we can in the direction of good nature. We say to ourselves, "I am going to meet So-and-So; what will please him?" We think that we will talk to this man about his farm, to that woman about her children, and to the other person about his last great operation on the street. And everybody goes to a room prepared for happiness, in a dress that tends to please other people, and therefore to attract some good-will toward themselves. We settle the topics which we will talk about and the topics which we will avoid. We do this for the sake of pleasing. And so

thirty or forty people spend an hour, or two hours, each trying to be agreeable. Selfishness is at the root to be sure; but everybody says, "It has been a charming night;" and philosophers say, "How much better it would be if persons went to see each other oftener, and learned more about each other! The horns and hoofs would be gone if people would get better acquainted with each other. The corners would be taken off, and the rough points would be smoothed down. It is a great thing to have people come together in society. When they are isolated they cannot be cultivated, of course." And so they moralize upon it. But the root of the whole matter is this: for an hour, or for two hours, men have employed the whole force of their minds, they have exerted all the powers of their being, to make others happy. There is no such power as a mind has to wake up and thrill another mind with genuine happiness—and that, too, when we are even in the lower modes of development.

Where the sphere is limited; where, for instance, a true affection has sprung up between two natures; and where both of them are kindled to the height and exaltation of their noblest feeling, how much more intense the happiness is which is produced by the action of one mind upon another, I need not detail to you.

These illustrations show what is the power in every man to make men about him happy if he will but use it for that purpose. And being made happy is not simply being tickled and made superficially happy. Every man is to "Please his neighbor *for his good* to edification." That is, he is to please the best part of him. He is to please his higher nature. He is not to flatter his vanity, and feed his body, and gratify his sensuous appetites. He is to cultivate and build up his own nature so that every part of him, acting on his fellow men, shall make them happy while inspiring them, and ennobling them, and lifting them higher and higher in life. That is the divine ideal of character.

Now, if this soul of ours be inspired, not merely by this general influence of well-wishing or love, but by a desire to please, to diffuse light, and cheer, and courage, and hope, and happiness wherever we go, making men feel that we are a bounty of the Lord to them; if in addition to natural affection the inspiration of the Holy Ghost is given, so that there is an ineffable influence, as well as the more obvious and constitutional power; so that there is that rare enthusiasm, that ethereal essence which goes with it—then you have, as I understand it, the whole conception of the character of man acting in the sphere of time; namely, that he is a being so re-created by the power of the transforming Spirit of God that he knows how to use his whole nature in such a way that it is a con-

tinual offering of bounty, of love, of hope, of cheer, of faith, and of elevation to all those among whom he goes. Wherever he goes he is like a band of music.

Go into the worst street in New York, where filth and vice and corruption abound, and where there is the crying of children, and the barking of dogs, and the quarreling of men and women, and let a band of music come in at one end and march through, playing as they march, and the sound of the music will put an end to the crying and barking and quarreling, and all will stand for the moment intent; and when the band has swept out, and the music has died away on the air, they will take a new breath, and will have to start new quarrels. They cannot weld the old ones on to the new ones.

Now, a Christian man ought to go through the world like a band of music. The great ecclesiastical body* who have recently come into our midst to bless us, and to excite our admiration, ought to carry themselves so that their presence shall be like that of a band of music. They ought to be so full of Christian graces, so full of the Holy Ghost, so full of all that makes manhood beautiful, and that irradiates life with hope and cheer, so full of sweetness, and patience, and temperance, and forbearance, so full of the spirit of honoring each other, and preferring one another, and bearing each the other's burdens, so full of godliness, that all the city shall stand still and hear these musicians of God play. And when they go away, the impression which they leave behind them should be such that all who have seen them and heard them sing shall long to see them and hear them sing again. Oh, if Christian men were only keyed to the command, *Thou shalt love God with all thy heart and mind and soul, and thy fellow men as thyself;* if every man loved every other man as a mother loves her babe to whom she gives days and nights, her whole time, her strength, her very life; if every man loved his neighbor as himself; if love *abounded* in every man, according to the idea of the apostle, what a different conception there would be of Christian life! If the work of God is going on in you, its tendency will be to create in you love toward others. Meetings and hymns and prayers are ladders by which to climb up to this; but they are good for nothing unless they lead to it.

Why are the prayers which go out of your mouth any better than the Chinaman's paper prayers which he puts into a mill, and which, when they come out, fly to the winds? They are no better if they leave you, as his prayers do him, the same stolid creature as before. Prayer is good which makes you good. And are you good? What

* The Methodist General Conference.

is the influence which you exert? Does God, looking upon you, feel that you love him, as the sun looking upon the flowers, knows, by the fragrance which they send up, that they love him? Do your neighbors find that your religion makes you so full of sweetness and beauty that they are always happier in your presence than out of it?

The battle of life does not consist in the fact that you are persecuted for being a Protestant or for being a Catholic. It does not consist in the fact that, being a Protestant or a Catholic, you are driven out of this place or out of that place on account of your religious views. It does not consist in the fact that you belong to the Universalists, or the Swedenborgians, or to any of the "sects," as Orthodox denominations call them. It does not consist in the fact that you have to submit to outward persecutions of any sort. The real persecutions of men in these days are those which are going on inside of them when they attempt to lift every part of their nature up into the sphere and realm of bountiful benevolence. That is what we have to fight for. Every step in that direction is a step of battle.

The first battle which we have to wage is what I shall call the battle of endowment. Men are born with very different proportional endowments, with very different temperaments, and into very different circumstances. These three departments constitute the natural divisions of the battle which every man fights. Some men are endowed with very much benevolence. No man, however, has benevolence so large but that there is very much training required before it can have a victory over all the other correlated faculties. The very best endowments demand education, drill, and the inspiration of the divine Spirit, before they can be brought to that state of ripeness in which their fruits shall be fit for all men's tastes. But there are few men who naturally have benevolence in the ascendency.

There are many men who are born with a disproportionate conscience—whose conscientiousness is excessively large. An eminent poet, speaking of his life, told me that he supposed that it had been much less useful than otherwise it would have been, because he was so conscientious. He said, "I am so afraid of doing wrong that I do not do anything, half the time." I do not think it is the peculiar difficulty of the greatest part of the people in New York that they are so conscientious that they hold in all the time, and that they do but little because they are afraid of not doing right; but I believe it was true of this noble poet. I think that his life was limited in its outplay on account of the excess of conscientiousness

in him. There are many men who are very conscientious; but conscience is not the crown of Christian character. Love is the master, and conscience must be its servant. Conscience is a hewer of wood and stone, and a bringer of water. Conscience is necessary; it is indispensable. But suppose a man were to build a house. No doubt it would be indispensable that he should have good square sills, and strong corner-posts. It would be essential that all the timbers should be of ample strength, and well knitted together and braced. But suppose, after all the timbers were in place and properly jointed, he should ask me to come to his house and see him. A house with nothing but timbers would be like a character which was made up of conscience and nothing else. Before a man asks you into his house, he covers the timbers up outside and inside so that the walls are smooth and pleasant to come in contact with and to look upon; and if a man's character is to be complete, conscience in that character should be covered up by other qualities and made sweet and smooth. Oftentimes, where a man invites his friends to see him, the ceiling of his house is frescoed, and the floor is richly carpeted, and the rooms are light and cheerful, and on every hand are tokens of hospitality. Hospitality does not ask you to sit on a log because a log is necessary to the building of a house. But many men are square-built, conscience-framed men. I would as lief sit on the square end of a log all my life as to live with men who, though they have consciences, are harsh and unlovely and unfruitful because there is nothing in them to cover up that conscience. Conscience is desirable and necessary; but in order to make it tolerable, love should be thrown around it. Conscience is the frame of character, and love is the covering for it.

Some men are born with a keen sense of truth and justice. I admit that truth and justice must be fundamental parts of Christian character; but I say that truth and justice were not the ideals of Christian character. They are partly the materials out of which it is made; but the essential element is always love.

Some men are born with large self-esteem. I like it, I like to see a man have it, and I wish I had more of it. It breeds self-respect. It breeds a sense of individuality—of separateness. It breeds, also, that sense of dignity which makes it a matter of importance to a man's own self what he is, and where he is, quite independent of other men's thoughts, and quite independent of all surrounding circumstances. It is a grand element; but it tends to ambition; it tends to coldness; it tends to check sympathy with other men. It is centripetal—not centrifugal. It inclines one to

draw all things in toward himself, rather than to give of what he has to others. It makes a man think that he is a god, and that other people should bow down to him. It creates in him a disposition to punish men who do not respect and worship him. When it is in excess it is one of the most dangerous and one of the most tormenting of faculties. It must be subdued by the spirit of love.

One of the most illustrious instances of the subjugation of this quality is seen in the case of the apostle Paul. He was a man of great and cruel pride, as we know by his persecuting spirit; but he was changed by the transforming power of Christ's love. And after his pride was changed, how he centered himself on love! How his life was wreathed about with the blossoming vines of love! How he was like a mountain of Paradise wherever men found him!

But he was not changed in an instant. Men think that Paul was converted all the way through when he was cast down on the road to Damascus. No; he was three years in Arabia; and it was twenty years before much more was heard of him. It was a long time after this memorable event before he came out with his letters, and presented to men the various developments of his experience. He had many struggles, and endured much suffering, before his victory over pride was achieved. Grace inspires a man to fight for such a victory, but it never brings him to it instantaneously. It works in us to will and to do. It stirs us up to fight the battle. In other words, it gives such an education that benevolence shall completely supersede and govern conscience, self-esteem, love of approbation, and all that is below them of the lower passions.

When a man goes into the church how do we question him, generally? We say to him, "Are you convinced that you are a great sinner?" "I am." "Do you feel that you have sinned against the law of God all your life long?" The man thinks that the law of God is something great; that it is something afar off. He has been taught that he has sinned against something or other—that great law; but he does not exactly know what it is; and he says, "Yes, I have sinned against the law of God." "Do you think that you deserve God's wrath and curse?" "I hope I do." "Do you feel that you have repented of sin?" "I think I have." "Do you think that God has changed your heart, and has given you a new one?" "I hope he has." "And do you mean to lead a Christian life?" "I do." "Go on to the next."

Now, all of that is, in one point of view, very well; but, after all, do you think that man understands that he is called to this life, to this battle, or to this education, if you choose to call it so, by which all the forces of his nature are to be transformed from

an earthly level of self-seeking or of serving himself to this serving of other men?

When the man gets home, after having been examined, on going into his house, he sees sitting in the large plush chair which he intended for himself. the maiden aunt who never was very agreeable to him, whom he had to take care of, who came on to him against his wish. Seeing her in that chair, he is irritated. At night, the child says, "Father, can't I sit up?" "No you can't," he says. "Go to bed." The child does not know what the matter is, but dares not ask, and gets a candle and goes to bed. Why is it that he is in such a fit of irritation? Simply because this aunt had his chair. She knew that it was his chair, and knew that he liked to sit in it; and yet she occupied it, and deprived him of the enjoyment of it. He has just been before the Examining Committee, preparatory to joining the church, and the first instant that an opportunity is presented to him of giving up his pleasure to somebody else, he flies like a struck tumbler all to splinters.

The next morning does he begin the battle at breakfast? A man who serves at the table has not a few chances to favor himself. There are many ways in which a man can serve out a steak or a chicken so as to save the best for himself. It is a straw that shows which way the wind blows. And does he forego this advantage and take the poorest himself?

In his house is a little orphan girl who is not very comely, and who is shiftless and disagreeable. Does he show a shining face to her? Does he extend to her any sympathy or encouragement? Does he excite in her a desire to please him because he is kind to her? Not at all.

Is there in him the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ? Is there in him that spirit which leads him to say, "I am willing to wash other people's feet"? There was nothing more menial that a servant could do, in the time of our Saviour, than to wash another's feet; and yet Christ did it, in order that he might say to his disciples, "I that am your Lord and Master do it, and you must do it." You must bow yourselves down to the lowest places where man suffers or sins, and there you must become his servant in love, and must serve him. There is not a child in the household that is not your master, and that you ought not to be a servant to. There is not a rheumatic and ugly creature in your neighborhood that you ought not to serve. There is not a poor man that you meet in your routine of business that you ought not to be Sir Bountiful to. Do you like these things? When you were asked to enlist under the banner of Christ; when you heard the silver trumpet blowing, and saw the white flag

floating, what visions you had! You wanted to join that army and go with those men. But when it comes to the feet-washing, how do you like that? Have you joined the Lord? Are you willing to put your hand underneath the men who need help? Do you love disagreeable, quarrelsome folks? Do you know how to be patient? Do you know how to be patient not only with men that are good, but with men that are bad, and wickedly bad? Do you know how to be as patient with others and their provocations as Christ has been with you and your infinite provocations? Do you know how to be as patient with other people's children as with your own?

What do people think a Christian is? What is the popular apprehension on this subject? Is it that he is a person who is most patient and forgiving? What is the general definition of Christianity? Do not some folks think that it means a kind of insurance policy, and that it has little to do with this life, but that it is a very good thing when a man dies? Are there not some people who think that it is a sort of rude covenant by which a man will be saved? I think that there is an element in conversion which insures salvation; but that sordid idea of being converted so as not to founder, and or the sake of being brought safely into port, is the lowest and least, part of Christianity. Before you are a full Christian, you are to be like your Master. There is a cross for you somewhere. You are to be like Him who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied himself of reputation, and took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and who, being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and suffered death for you; and who taught you what to do by the illustrious act of washing his disciples' feet. Do men think that religion is to keep Sunday? Keeping Sunday is a good thing. Do men think that religion is to have fast days? Fast days may be proper to those who can stand them. Do men think that religion is to perform certain devotional acts? Such acts may be right and proper. But the vitality of religion is not in these things.

When Peter heard the cock crow, it was not the tail feathers that crew; the crowing came out from the inside of the cock. Religion is something more than the outward observances of the church. It does not consist in forms and ceremonies and symbols. It is the life that is inside of men that constitutes the religious element. And in that inside life no man can do other than contest.

Then go from faculty to temperament. Some men are sluggish of temperament; and they justify themselves on that ground. They

say, "You know that I have to wake up before I can do so and so. Temperaments cannot change." They excuse themselves for a great many delinquincies on account of the sluggishness of their temperament. Other men are of a fiery temperament. They are nervous to excess. Other men are thoracic in temperament. They generate an enormous quantity of blood. They are red in the face—fiery red. Others are of an abdominal temperament. They digest too much food, and it assimilates too slowly, and they become gross and flabby, and are inclined to sleep a great deal. And the somnolent man justifies himself for this that and the other fault on account of his temperament, just as the fiery man justifies himself on account of his temperament. But is it not the duty of each man to subdue his temperament to the power of Christian love? Is there no work required of you in transforming your nature into the likeness of the divine Spirit?

Then, men are surrounded by all the inequalities of life. We find them subject to various circumstances. It is hard for a man who knows more in his little finger than another man does in his whole body to be subject to that man, whose body slopes in the wrong way,—is biggest in his feet and runs to a point at his head. It is hard for an intelligent man to be under an ignorant man. Especially is it hard, when he is a spiteful man, to answer not again, and not only not to answer again, but not to want to answer. It is hard for a man to be so subdued that he can obey the injunction of the apostle when he says to servants, "Be obedient to your masters, slaves." It is hard to be obedient to one's master even when he is gentle; but it is far more so when he is forward.

Can you take the position in which providence places you, though it be in the scullery, in the kitchen, or in the back shop. Can you bear, patiently, to be a pauper, a bankrupt, among men whom, in many respects, you can look down upon, and have them point at you, and speak slightingly of you, and avoid you, or, when they meet you, not see you until you have passed, and then turn around and say of you, "He has failed, and he is of no account"? Can you take all the contempts of life, all the flings at your misfortune, all these inequalities, and feel that you have been put upon; can you feel that you are an object of envy and jealousy; can you feel that your character has been maligned; can you feel that you have been dealt with foully and have been wronged; can you take all that comes in your natural life; can you see your name used for slanderous purposes; and then can you say, "Dear Lord, thanks for these rough schoolmasters to teach me in the book of life"? Can you turn right around and pray for those who despitefully use you?

Here is a man who has shot you through your children, and wounded you to the very quick; here is a man who has attacked you in your honor; and all that is evil in you says, "Damn him, rise up and curse him;" and can you stand and say, "Jesus, Master, now let me be like thee"? Can you say, "I pray for him"? Can you say, "Open love, open pity, in my heart"? Can you say, "O let me, by patient continuance in well-doing, put to shame these men who are persecuting me"? Can you do good to your enemies and not let them know it; can you not only not put obstacles in their way, but take them out of their way; can you open a heart full of balm, that, like a garden, shall pour out upon them the sweetness of perfume; and can you do these things because you are a Christian, because you love Jesus, and because you are trying to live so that you shall be by his side in the eternal world? Is that your idea of being a Christian? And do you suppose that you can do such things without a fight? Do they not require a battle, and a royal battle?

I have developed this view of what it is to be a Christian for the sake of showing that the Scriptural idea of piety, though it exhorts to activity and the exertion of strength, enjoins the milder qualities of the Spirit, such as love and meekness and humility. When you go through the New Testament, and search out Christ's teachings, and put them together, you will find that they point to the royal manhood of a love which is supereminent over all that is in you, and makes you, toward all men, gentle, happiness-giving, courage-inspiring, cheering, shining, so that wherever you go you carry joy. A man from whom children run away when he comes where they are, ought to examine his evidences quickly.

Though when you go among persons, they may not, acting under prejudice, at first like you, you ought to see to it that their dislike of you does not last long. You ought not to stay a week in any man's house without his thinking better of manhood for your staying there. You ought not to be a teacher in a school without making sure that the scholars have a better feeling toward you when you leave than when you come among them. It is your business to "let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

How many clerks have sat in church and seen their employers partake of the Lord's Supper, and, knowing what they did in the store, said to themselves, "Well, if that man is a Christian, I thank God that I am not one!" What a testimony that is!

On the other hand, a child brought up by infidel or unbelieving parents, sometimes says, "I thought religion was all a pretense or

delusion; I was taught to think so; but I have been with people who I was satisfied, by the way they lived, had something that I have not; and I want that something, whatever it is." When they see the exhibition of that grace of God which turns a man's whole soul into an orchard of fruit, or a garden of flowers, and sweetens his disposition, and makes his life beautiful, they want it.

Now I am prepared to give you my idea of a church. I believe that a man has a right to be a gardener. Any man who loves flowers, and can raise them, no matter whether he can trace his lineage back to one of the apostles or not, has a right to raise them, and call himself a gardener. If a man can trace his pedigree from period to period, straight back to the apostles, he is no worse for that, and he is no better. Who a man's ancestry were does not make a particle of difference with what he is. A man who has the power and skill to raise fine flowers is a gardener, and deserves to be called one.

What is a garden? It is a place set apart for raising flowers, Wherever there is a place set apart for raising flowers it is a garden, if flowers are raised there. What is a church? It is simply a collection of men who undertake to subdue all their forces to the law of love; who undertake to use their thought-power, their sentimental-power, their whole nature, their time, their business, everything that is in them or around about them, to regulate their life according to the Spirit of God; who undertake, in all that they do, to act under the influence of kindness and love. What do they come together for? To help each other do it. They come together to intershine upon each other; to give each other the advantage of counsel, of sympathy, of succor, and of inspiration. Where two or three are gathered together in the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ, there is the germ of a church.

"Well, what about government?" Nothing about government. "Well, what about ordinances?" Nothing about ordinances. "Well, what about the ministry?" Nothing about the ministry. You may have as much government or as little, as you please; you may have as many ordinances or as few, as you please; you may regulate the affairs of the ministry as you please; but the essential elements of a church consist in the disposition of its individual members who love God supremely and their fellow men as themselves. A man who does love God and his fellow men thus, is fit to be a member, and is a member, of the invisible church. A church is not a hereditary institution; it is not an artificial thing; it is the gathering together of sanctified benevolences in individual men. That constitutes a church.

Suppose I should go into a vast stone building that was filled full of funereal-looking pews, and that was made to look like a sepulcher, very little light being allowed to come in, and should see rows of coffins standing in all the pews; and suppose I should go around and look at these coffins, and read the inscriptions on them, among which was this eminent name, and that eminent name; and suppose that I should be told that this place, filled with coffins, in whom were men as dead as door-nails, was the church of the living God? It would not be one particle more horrible than to go into great assemblies of men, pompously surrounded, who were dead to God, dead to love, dead to all spiritual elements, and whose life was a life of envy, and selfishness, and jealousy, and all uncharitableness, and call that God's church. Not only are all such men dead, but they ought to have been buried long ago; for they stink! Is that a church yonder? What makes it a church? Stone on stone? What makes it a church? Timber on timber? Why is it a church? Because it holds a congregation vast as a caravan in a desert, and as desertly surrounded? What is it that makes a church? It is the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ dwelling among men, and saying to them, "No greater love hath any man than this, that he lay down his life for another; and ye should lay down your lives for others." The towel; the basin of water; the washing of the feet; the sympathizing with all men and women, however good or however bad they may be; the giving one's life-force for the sake of making others happy and better—these things belong to the church of God, and to the lives of the members of that church. They are the lifters who take hold down low, and are raising society up. They are the bountiful, the joy-producing men, who can stand under their load, and carry it, and smile as they carry it, though it be a cross, a yoke, a burden. They are Christians who, being fought, can return good for evil; who, being cursed, can send showers of prayers down on the heads of those who curse them. It is such men that make a true church. You must begin on the inside to make a Christian church. You cannot begin on the outside. The church of the living God is one in which the divine Spirit of love reigns.

How many churches have we according to this definition? There is one church that has never gone into captivity. There is one church in which the law of love has always been supreme. It is the church of the cradle. It is the church of the household. It has its saints—its saint mother and its saint father. That is a church where love is the prime element, the sustaining law, the educating

force, the life-principle. And if you could gather a hundred families into a church who should carry with them this spirit of love, and manifest it wherever they went, in all the spheres of life, do you suppose that anything could withstand their influence? If a body of men and women, filled with the fire and zeal of the Holy Ghost, should go forth, giving supremacy to love in all the offices of the intellect, the imagination, the heart, appearing before men as glowing witnesses of this fundamental quality of Christian life, do you suppose that city could long go without its pentecost?

Brethren, we have tried the cudgel, we have tried the sword, we have tried vehement declamation, we have tried eloquence, we have tried controversy, we have tried conscience, we have tried everything, in our efforts to subdue the world. There is only one thing left, and that is love. If that fails, the world is damned. We have not loved enough. We have not been patient and zealous enough. We have not been glowing enough. We have not opened the heaven so that where we stand there is seen the light of the glory of God, as it shines in the face of Christ Jesus. We have not brought prayer as a great battery to bear against the world. But when we do get all these mighty forces to act coöperatively, in platoons, I believe the latter-day glory will begin to come fast.

I do not believe we shall ever be able to resist and bear up against the theories, speculations, skepticisms, that are in the world, by any power of mere ratiocination or statement—though there is a subordinate work in that direction. I believe that no matter who goes right or wrong in regard to philosophies, these are not enough. I am willing that Mr. Darwin, and Mr. Huxley, and Herbert Spencer, should march on. They may analyze and synthesize as much as they please, but one thing I am certain of: that when heaven and earth shall pass away, there will be one thing that will not pass away, and that is a symmetrical, powerful, manly character, keyed to love, and conducted on the principle of love. And if there are denominations or sects or men who are teaching any theology so as to bring up ranks and multitudes whose characters are formed upon this pattern, they will stand against any heresy or false philosophy that shall be urged in any quarter. Facts will overthrow theories; and when facts cohere, and bear upon a single point, they are irresistible.

The sublimity of life consists in sanctified human nature. And in the power of loving men, who live to use all their forces perpetually in sympathy and harmony, to produce glory to God in the highest, and good-will among men on earth—in this supreme fact there is that which no man can gainsay, or wants to gainsay.

Oh, tell me not that unbelief is to rule the coming times! Tell me not that the school of the atheist is to rob the heaven of all hope. Tell me not that corruption is my God, and that the grave is my judgment day, that remands me back to dust again. Tell me not that all I have hoped and believed is but a fantasy—but the lining of the sepulcher—but the frescoing of the grave. I do believe that out of this school of life there is coming up an army of men who mean something more than annihilation. I believe that the grave, dark as it looks, is but the door through which the nobler part of men—faith, hope, love—is ascending to the royalty of an everlasting existence.

Away with immortality, if it be but the transferring of pride and selfishness to another sphere; but if immortality is the love of God bred in the souls of men, filling the heaven with sweetness, and filling eternity with joy unspeakable and full of glory, then I hail it; and with heart, and soul, and endeavor, I lift my life toward it, and pray that though I have not attained, I may by the grace of God yet attain, to the resurrection of the just, and that I may know what it is to dwell among the spirits of just men made perfect, Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and the eternal Father of love.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We rejoice in thee at all times, our Father; or, when we do not rejoice, at least we have peace. We have peace even though it be in small measure. We hope when peace seems to fail. From hope we gather peace; and from peace joy; and joy upon joy mounts up, at times, full of glory. And yet, these are intermittent. It is but at times that the light is clear. We walk by faith when we cannot walk by sight. We live in the sight of the invisible, and in the hope of that which we cannot see. Thou thyself art the invisible, and thy realm, our home, is invisible, and all that go out from us are hidden; and into that great world which to the flesh seems shadowy and vague we go, quickened by the Spirit with apprehension to make it clear and plain, and are architects of our own hope. We build, and fill with a blessed population, the city of our God. And thou thyself, O God, art to us that which we would make thee to be. So, then, that we may not build after the pattern of baseness and selfishness and pride, grant that we may have that holiness of heart without which no man shall see the Lord. May we be better in order that we may see God, and know how to fashion him to our thought and imagination gloriously—far above the infirmity of man—far above the experience of the flesh. Of things borrowed from our innermost life in our most exalted moments may we fashion the realm and royalties of the heavenly land, and may our thoughts be made fruitful by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. May we have that spirit of revelation and of light, that inspiration, which kindles from the hint the whole reality, and from the germ teaches the full growth. Grant that we may know how to behold thee, and to see that that which we behold is our Lord and our God. Take away from us, we pray thee, all those things which shall make our God an idol—which shall lift up into exaltation and make the object of our praise that which is base and wicked among men. Deliver us, we beseech of thee, from idolatry of thought and imagination. It is little that we turn away from blocks of wood, from idols made of stone, and of clay, and of gold, and of silver, as from temples consecrated by men's superstitious hands, if yet in our thoughts we raise up before us a view of God which is idolatrous and wicked. Deliver us from this. Grant that we may have that purity, that fullness of love, that sense of justice, which springs from the bosom of love. Grant that we may have such conceptions of holiness in men, and of greater holiness in God, as shall fill the realm with One altogether lovely, the Chief among ten thousand—One in whom, when the eye beholds him, it shall rejoice—One who, when revealed, shall call forth from all that are in heaven above, and in the earth beneath, and throughout all creation, rapturous songs of joy and acclamations of royalty. Grant that we may have such conceptions of thee that we shall walk with God—and the true God. And may we know that thou art the true God to us in that we are becoming like thee, changed into that wisdom which love produces; into that justice which comes from love; into that purity which is inspired by love; into that patience, that strength, that fruitfulness, which springs from the divine root of love. Reveal to us this realm of thine. Make known to us the secret of God in this.

We pray, O Lord, that we may hate all forms of selfishness, and love that which is right. May we know how to do things that pertain to ourselves without selfishness. May we know how to have power in ourselves, and yet to have it as a royal scepter reached out perpetually to help those who are most needy. Give us health-power but that we may minister to the sick. Give us the power of refinement but that we may cheer and soften

the ways of the rude. Grant unto us the fruitfulness of thought, grant unto us the power of the higher nature in things intellectual and moral, that we may be a light to those who are in darkness. May our life be as sweet music, to call those who are in solitude and in sorrow forth from their misery. And everywhere that we go may there be that courage, that good cheer, that bountifulness, that patience, that gentleness, that fortitude in suffering, that abundance in good works, in every way, which shall make men behold our Lord and Master in us. As even the smallest water can shine out the stars from its surface, though they be not there; so, though we be small, and the circumference of our being is diminished, yet thou hast granted us to reflect thee so that men seeing our good works glorify our Father which is in heaven. Oh! let there be good in us inwardly, not for our sakes alone. May the fragrance of the divine indwelling be such that all men shall take something of the sweetness of our experience.

We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon all who are with thee this morning in this place. Thou knowest who are loved of thee. All are loved; but some more than others. Thou knowest who lay their head in thy bosom; and thou knowest who stay further and further off from thee. Thou knowest the very ones that shall betray thee. Yet look upon all thy people with compassion according to their necessities. And we pray that thou wilt grant, this morning, to every one who is present, that he may hear in his own spirit his own name called. Even as Mary heard her name in the garden, and knew her Lord, whom she could not behold by the seeing of the eye, so may there be those unspeakable tokens of love between thee and every one that shall be manifest tokens that thou art theirs and that they are thine.

We pray for those especially who are lost. Draw near to them as needing thee most. Come unto those who are most faithless in duty, as needing more inspiration. Arouse those who are slumbering. Quicken those who are stupid. Give force to those who are feeble. Awaken the interest of those who are indifferent. Give connectedness to those who are but occasionally Christian or Christ-like. Grant to every one as he severally needs.

We pray not for those who glow and abound in joy. We pray not for those who have enough,—to whom comes the summer with all its blessings. Look upon the winter-stricken, the barren, the tempest-tossed and not comforted, the unstable, the unhappy. We pray that thou wilt grant thy mercies to rest upon all such, in the several relations in which thou hast placed them in thy providence. May all those in the household have a blessing of God,—to them the sweetest, and purest, and nearest to the heavenly church of any on earth. Grant that they may stand in its midst, not unmindful of all the goodness of God to them. And if sorrow shall come to thy people, grant that they may be able to bear it. Even as a soldier carries his shield into the very battle, and is protected by it, so grant that the love of God may be their shield against disappointments, and trials, and burdens, and all those irritations which require fortitude and continuance in well-doing. Give them strength to overcome all opposition and all obstacles. Grant that in every household there may be in large measure a victory of Christian life over all temptations to envy, or malice, or quarrelsomeness, or honor each to himself. Grant, we pray thee, that meekness, and sweetness, and disinterestedness, and the even and continuous flow thereof, may abound in every household. And may we have a sense of our imperfection, in that we are coming short every day, and that we fail to perform our duty to each other. How few of us wash each other's feet! How few of us prefer each other! How do we, in our gifts, only bid for larger gifts to be received again! How far are we from the

grace and bounty of the forgiving God, who never gives but to forget that he has given! O Lord our God, we pray that we may be so trained and disciplined in the household in the royal lore of love that we may be able to communicate the love of Christian men and women to the world around about us. Oh, grant that we may be as salt; that we may be as light! May we carry no more wounds to the world which is already overthrown and cast down. May we not strike with the violent. May we not add envy, and jealousy, and evil feelings to the turbulence of the tide that already sweeps down toward the dead sea of human life. Oh, grant that we may bring silence to clamor, and music to discord, and better living to quarrelsomeness! Grant that we may go teaching men patience by the exhibition of it; that we may be meek, and humble, and sweet-minded, and strong to endure, unprovokable. bearing abundant fruit, so that, like our Master, we may have not only peace for ourselves, but peace to give to others. And so, as great music drowns all discord, may the greatness of Christian living around about hide the wickedness and sadness of human life.

We pray that thou wilt enlarge our conceptions of Christian life. May we seek thee in the heaven above, and in our hearts, and in our duties; and may we learn to believe that thou art reigning in the heavens by the power with which thou dost visit us in our limited experiences on earth.

O thou blessed God that hast promised so many things, fulfill them to us. Thou hast fulfilled some of them. Thou hast strengthened us in hours of great sorrow. Thou hast given us patience to go through great trials. We have been taxed and tasked, and thou hast supported us. How many hearts are able to bear witness that but for thy rod and thy staff the valley and the shadow of death would have been too much for them! We have stumbled in the way, but they have comforted us; and by their help we have endured. By the grace of God we are what we are to-day.

And now, we pray that we may not forget all the lessons of the past; and when the same storm comes again, may we not have the same cowardice because thou art asleep. Grant that we may look forward into life, and strive hereafter to have more calm and steady faith in Him that rules in heaven and upon earth. May we trust God in darkness and in light; when we are prosperous, and when we are in poverty; when we are under vehement assault, and when it is calm. Grant that under all circumstances we may find thee an all-sufficient Saviour. Grant that in every time of need, and every time of joy, we may find thee near to us. And may our life be as the life of those who hear without ceasing the chime of heavenly bells; who are always in reach of the heavenly fragrance; who are not far from that heavenly land which casts its twilight and comfort into the stormy experience of this lower life.

Our children call us. Our parents are among those whose voices cry "Come," from the sacred battlements. How many companions who were dear to us in life are there, and behold with sorrow and sadness our fading faith and faint courage, and cry out, "How blessed are they who persevere to the end, and are finally saved!" May all the blessedness of that other life, and our hope therein, come brightly to us this day, and day by day, until, at last, having overcome every adversary, and having maintained our place in the field, and standing after the battle has swept by, we shall be counted as worthy to enter as victors, crowned, not by our own hand, but by thine, that we may take our wreaths and laurels, and cast them at thy feet, O Captain of our salvation, Jesus, Lord, Master, saying, "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be the praise and the glory forever and ever!" *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Grant, our Father, that we may not be discouraged by the greatness of the way. We stand as those who have inherited much land, but know little of husbandry; and when we look out upon the toughness of the soil, and upon the work that lies before us in subduing it all to fruit, and to flowers, we are appalled. If we had not known that more were for us than were against us, we should have been discouraged long ago. If we believed that thou didst shut out the beams of thy providence from us, and didst leave us to wander without thy guidance or love, life would have no cheer nor hope for us. We should be of all men most miserable. For what has made life dear but cheer and hope? We have been encouraged by thoughts of noble characters and heroic lives. But if we believed that there was an end of us at death, who could weep enough upon the grave, or could find comfort, that had buried his dead? It is belief in resurrection and in a life beyond that sustains us. We rejoice that it is not to be such a life as we have had here. On earth, we have limped; we have been in hospitals; we have been wounded, and maimed; we have been attacked on the right and on the left; we have been overthrown. And then, at the call of God, we have forsaken our sin, and risen up, and come out of our prison, convoyed by the angels of heaven. Through thy help we have obtained victories. Though we have had defeat, we have had triumph. And gradually our passions have burned out. Nature has had less and less power upon us, and grace has had more and more; and at last we have reached the land of true benevolence. O Lord, we thank thee for these experiences of the power and royalty of divine love in our souls.

And now we pray that we may renew our evidences, and ask ourselves if we are like Christ. Why do we wear his name? Are our lives full of bright suggestions of him that shine on every hand? Is his spirit in us to restrain, inspire, imbue, and sweeten life? O bring us to thyself, Lord Jesus. We do not wish to go home with nothing. We desire to carry thither many graces—much fruit. We would not go home so as by fire; but even so would we go rather than be banished forever. Oh, for a victory that shall put some laurel on our brow, so that thou shalt delight in us as thine own!

We know how it is with our children, Lord Jesus. How we love them! How we long for them! How pleased our pride is with their good! How great is our shame at that which is evil in them! How we carry them in our arms! And are we better than thou art? Dost thou not carry us? Art thou not longing for us, and working in us to will and to do the things which shall make us meet for glory? We beseech thee to go on with thy work. Be not impatient with us. Thou that didst suffer death itself, wilt thou not with thy sufferings give us all needed things? Teach us to be like thee. Bring us through life, bring us victoriously through the gate of death, bring us within the sounds of angel voices, and then, within the circle of thy heart, caught by the inspiration of God, and flying swifter than angels fly, our ransomed souls shall go home to thee to be forever with the Lord.

And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, shall be the praise forever and ever. *Amen.*

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